



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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ENHANCED SCHOOL TECHNOLOGY DESIGNED TO ENHANCE LEARNING

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – Kentucky teachers and students are seeing the benefits of some significant technology upgrades this school year.

Today, the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) announced that all 173 of the state's public school districts have met the national goal of 100 kb of Internet bandwidth for each K-12 student. It is believed to be the first state to do so.

"This is just another way Kentucky is leading the nation in public education," Commissioner of Education Terry Holliday said. "Our teachers told us they needed a faster, more reliable system to take advantage of all of the great digital instructional resources and other technology-based education tools and supports that are available. So, I'm glad we were able to meet the need and do what is best for student learning."

The enhanced 100 kb per student speed is, on average, nearly 10 times faster, more robust and reliable than what Kentucky school districts had for their students just two year ago and nearly doubles a 56 kb connection that had to be shared across an entire district 20 years ago.

"This is the latest in a long list of firsts for the Kentucky Education Technology System, dating back to 1995 when Kentucky was the first state to provide 'high speed' Internet service to every school district in the state," said David Couch, associate commissioner for the Office of Knowledge, Information and Data Services at the Kentucky Department of Education. "Back then it took an e-mail 15-20 minutes to get from one district to another. I think everyone will agree, we've come a long way in a relatively short period of time."

Couch and Commissioner Holliday credit the legislature for understanding the importance of education technology and funding improvements over the last two decades. In 2014, the General Assembly appropriated \$5.8M to pay for the most recent improvements to school technology.

"This upgrade took a major logistical and technological undertaking by telecommunications companies, education technology vendor partners, KDE staff, Finance and Administration Cabinet staff and technology staff in each school district," Couch said.

(more)

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In addition to enhanced Internet speeds, in the past several months KDE has upgraded the protective firewall that defends against cyberattacks and provides a safer, more secure and reliable Internet experience for KY K-12 students, teachers and staff in each of the 173 districts.

Also, KDE has made significant progress in implementing a new Internet Content Management System that helps districts maximize the faster Internet speeds. Districts will be able to prioritize the most important services, such as virtual courses, digital instructional content, on-line testing and student Internet research, and then manage Internet bandwidth to accommodate them. This means each district also has the ability to make other non-school related services, like students using the school's Internet network to stream recreational music/videos to their personally owned Smartphones while at school or playing non-educational games on the school's computers, a much lower priority or totally unavailable.

Approximately 166 districts, including the state's two largest – Fayette County and Jefferson County, are either already installed or will have the new Internet Content Management System installed by next Friday. The remaining seven districts will be installed when their existing contract ends with their current provider.

The recent technology upgrades meet the requirements of state Internet safety regulations and the Federal Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA) and make Kentucky eligible to receive an estimated \$43.3 million in federal E-rate rebate funding.

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